

REMARKS

This is in full and timely response to the Office Action dated December 30, 2003 (Paper No. 112). A Petition to Extend the Time for Response to this Non-Final Action to Within the First Extended Month accompanies this submission. Reconsideration and reexamination are respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Rejection of claim 3, amendment of claims 4 to 6, and retention of claims 7 to 15

In the non-final pending Action, claims 3 to 15 were pending for reconsideration. Claims 7 to 15 were allowed. Claim 3 was rejected. Claims 4 to 6 were indicated to be allowable if rewritten to include the subject matter of their base claim 3 and any intervening claims. Accordingly, claim 3 is canceled, and its subject matter included in each of claims 4, 5, and 6 that had depended on claim 3. Now, each of claims 4 to 6 is rewritten into independent form. Claims 7 to 15 are retained unamended.

Thus, claims 4 to 15 as now pending are in condition for allowance, and early notice to that effect is respectfully solicited.

Priority

It is noted with appreciation that the Action includes an acknowledgment of a certified copy of the claim for priority.

Information Disclosure Statement Acknowledgments

It is also noted with appreciation that the Action was accompanied by initialed IDS Forms PTO-1449 showing consideration of the information provided in papers 4 and 10.

If any further matters remain, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned for prompt consideration.

Dated: April 16, 2004

Respectfully submitted,

By

Ronald P. Kananen

Registration No.: 24,104

(202) 955-3750

Attorneys for Applicant

Customer No. 23353